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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9176

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DECAPTIONED

FOR ASST SECT VAKY

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

E.O. 12065 XDS-1 1/22/09 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS SHUM, AR, PBOR, PDIP, CI
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] AMBASSADOR EXCHANGES VIEWS WITH FONMIN

1. [REDACTED] ENTIRE TEXT)

2. HOLMBERG DEATH: I MET WITH FONMIN PASTOR ON FRIDAY, JAN 19
IN HIS OFFICE FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF EXTENDING CONDOLENCES
OF USG FOR UNTIMELY DEATH OF MS. HOLMBERG, KIDNAPPED AND KILLED
BY DROWNING A FEW WEEKS AGO. CONDOLENCES HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY
EXTENDED GOA ON JAN, 16 WHEN I MET WITH GENERAL VIOLA, JUNTA
PRESIDENT AND ARMY COMMANDER. (SEE BUENOS AIRES 0461)

3. CONDOLENCES WERE GREATLY APPRECIATED BY FONMIN. HE DESCRIBED
THE HOLMBERG DEATH AS A DASTARDLY AND COWARDLY CRIME. HE MADE
ASSURANCES EVERY CONCEIVABLE EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO FIND
PERPETRATORS. PASTOR SAID "EVEN IF PERSON OR PERSONS INVOLVED
HOLD KEY POSITIONS WITH GOA, PROSECUTION WILL BE PURSUED TO
FULLEST EXTENT OF LAW." HIS QUOTE WAS "LET THE CHIPS FALL
WHERE THEY MAY". PASTOR INFERRED HOLMBERG DEATH NOT
ATTRIBUTABLE TO TERRORISM BUT HE STOPPED SHORT OF ACCUSING
ONE OF GOA'S SECURITY FORCES.

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4. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: IN INQUIRED IF THE IAHRV VISIT
WAS STILL ON TRACK. FONMIN REPLIED IT WAS VERY MUCH ON

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SCHEDULE AND HE GAVE MAY 20 AS DATE OF VISIT. I ASKED WHAT WAS BEING DONE TO PREPARE FOR THE IAHRC VISIT. PASTOR STATED BY TIME THE COMMISSION ARRIVES IN COUNTRY MOST OF PRISON FACILITIES WILL HAVE BEEN "CLEANED OUT OF ANY CONTROVERSIAL MATTER." I ASKED IF THIS MEANT LITERALLY WHITE-WASHING, PAINTING, REPAIRING PHYSICAL PLANTS OR DID IT REFER TO RELEASING PRISONERS. HE SAID IT MEANT BOTH, EXCEPTING PRISONERS CHARGED WITH CRIME WOULD REMAIN AS COMMON CRIMINALS. PASTRO EXUDED CONFIDENCE GOA WOULD BE IN TIP-TOP SHAPE FOR IAHRC.

5. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: I EXPLAIN TO FONMIN MY RECENT MEETING WITH MESSRS. EISENHOWER AND HENSCHER, AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (B.A. 0577). I STATED THESE AMERICANS WERE PROTESTING THE CONFISCATION OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE FROM THEIR HEADQUARTERS IN BUENOS AIRES. I MADE THE POINT THAT I HAD BEEN SHOWN SAMPLES OF LITERATURE CONFISCATED THAT IN MY OPINION IT WAS STRICTLY RELIGIOUS MATERIAL. IN MY OPINION THERE WAS NO WAY LITERATURE COULD BE CLASSIFIED AS SUBVERSIVE. I THEN WENT INTO DETAILED EXPLANATION ON HOW US SUPREME COURT HAD RESOLVED JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CASES. I GAVE HIM THE SAME EXPLANATION GIVEN GENERAL VIOLA ON JAN. 16. (SEE BUENOS AIRES 0461). FONMIN'S SLEEPY LOOKING EYES OPENED AND INDICATED A SINCERE INTEREST IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THEIR DILEMMA WITH THE WITNESSES. HE STATED MY EXPLANATIONS WERE MOST INTERESTING AND HE WOULD BRING THEM TO PRESIDENT VIDELA AND MININT HARGUINDEGUAY'S ATTENTION. I THEN REMINDED PASTOR OF OUR DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO HIS OFFICE OBJECTING TO GOA'S TAKING RELIGIOUS LITERATURE FROM THE WITNESSES. HE STATED THE NOTE HAD BEEN REFERRED TO MININTERIOR AND WAS WAITING FOR A REPLY. FONMIN WAS MADE

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AWARE OF HIGH USG, CONGRESSIONAL AND JUST PLAIN AMERICAN INTEREST IN THEIR HANDLING OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CASES. I STATED THERE WAS FEELING ABROAD THAT ARGENTINA WAS A BIGOTED AND INTOLERANT COUNTRY TOWARDS NON-CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS GROUPS. I CONCLUDED THE SUBJECT BY STATING I HOPED WE COULD GET AN EARLY, FAVORABLE DECISION ON THE MATTER.

6. BEAGLE CHANNEL: I COMPLIMENTED FONMIN FOR HIS ROLE IN THE BEAGLE CHANNEL NEGOTIATIONS WITH CARDINAL SAMORE AND CHILE. HE APPEARED PLEASED AT USG SUPPORT OF PAPAL PARTICIPATION. PASTOR STATED HIS CONFIDENCE ON A FAVORABLE RULING FROM THE POPE. HE SAID THE POP'S ACCEPTANCE TO MEDIATE HAS NEVER

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BEEN IN DOUBT. FONMIN WASTED TO WORDS IN STATING THE MONTEVIDEO ACCORD WAS A SET-BACK TO VIDELA'S OPPONENTS.

7. COMMENT: FONMIN IS AN AFFABLE, TIRED-LOOKING BUREAUCRAT. HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY SPARKLE AND NEITHER DOES ONE GET THE FEELING THAT HE KNOWS WHAT THE FONOFF IS ALL ABOUT. HIS BIGGEST CLAIM TO FAME IS HE IS RELATED TO PRESIDENT VIDELA BY MARRIAGE. THUS, I NEVER HAVE ANY OPTIMISM THAT SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WITH PASTOR WILL EVER GET OUT OF HIS OFFICE. I GUESS BY SHEER OSMOSIS PORTIONS MIGHT TRICLE THROUGH TO VIDELA. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO MOUNT PRESSURE ON ALL FRONTS AND ALL LEVELS FOR POSITIVE ACTION ON THE ISSUES WE HAVE OUTSTANDING WITH THE GOA. EMBASSY IS REPORTING BY SEPTTEL EFFORTS WE BELIEVE GOA IS MAKING TO GET THINGS LINED UP FOR THE VISIT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. THE FONMIN SPEAKS AS IF ARGENTINA ANTICIPATED NO PROBLEMS FOR THE COMMISSION VISIT.
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